

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1876

MCLENNAN'S STUDIES IN ANCIENT HISTORY

Studies in Ancient History, Comprising a Reprint of Primitive Marriage. By John Ferguson McLennan, M.A., LL.D., Advocate. (London: Quaritch, 1876.)

THE learned and ingenious author of "Primitive Marriage" has in this volume republished that excellent work, appending to it his paper on "Kinship in Ancient Greece," which originally appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*, and some essays, in which he discusses Bachofen's "Das Mutterrecht," Morgan's work on Relationships, Sir Henry Maine's views on the constitution of the Ancient Irish Family, and the chapter on Marriage in my "Origin of Civilisation."

Bachofen supposes that in the first stage of the development of the family marriage was unknown; and his theory is that at length the women, being by nature nobler and more sensitive than the men, and impelled moreover by strong religious aspirations, combined to put an end to this system, and to introduce marriage. For this an appeal to force became necessary and was successful. The result of the victory, moreover, was that the women claimed and established a superiority over the men; they were the heads of the family; after them the children were named; through them the rights of succession were traced, and they even exercised a political as well as a domestic supremacy. At length, however, men reasserted their original supremacy; they reconquered the first place in the family and the state, established their right to the inheritance of property, and to confer their names upon their children. Mr. McLennan considers that Bachofen's "methods and results are equally unscientific;" he points out that the system of inheritance through females is really no evidence of female superiority, but arises partly from marriage not being monogamous, or such as permitted the certainty of fatherhood, and partly also, he considers, from the fact of women not yet living in their husbands' houses. At the same time he fully concedes to Bachofen the honour of being the first to point out that a system of kinship through mothers only had generally preceded that through the male line.

Nor is Mr. McLennan more disposed to accept the theory of Mr. Morgan, which indeed he characterises as a "wild dream, not to say nightmare, of early institutions." Mr. McLennan supposes that in Mr. Morgan's opinion his tribal organisation was an institution intentionally designed to prevent the intermarriage of near relations. In support of this he quotes the passage in which Mr. Morgan says: "It is to be inferred that the tribal organisation was designed to work out a reformation with respect to the intermarriage of brothers and sisters."

From this and other passages a previous writer in this journal, and I myself, had supposed that Mr. Morgan regarded the steps in his system of development as arbitrary and intentional.

Nor do I even now see how we could have arrived at any other conclusion. Mr. Morgan has, however, explained that this is not his theory, and I am not therefore sure whether either Mr. McLennan or I thoroughly under-

stand his view. The solution which he has given, however, of the origin of the family in Mr. McLennan's opinion—"failing to explain the phenomena must sink below the level of reasonable guessing, to which level indeed it must have sunk even had it explained the phenomena, if by any other set of mere conjectures the phenomena could be equally well explained."

Mr. McLennan himself considers that the earliest form of marriage (if indeed it can be so called) was that still prevalent amongst the Nairs of Malabar, in which one wife was married to several husbands not necessarily related to one another. Under this system the idea of relationship naturally took the form of kinship through females. Family property went ultimately to the daughters of their sisters; a man's heirs being in the first place his brothers, and subsequently his sister's children. From the Nair system was, in Mr. McLennan's opinion, gradually developed (in many cases through an intermediate form anciently prevalent in Britain) the Thibetan species of polyandry in which the sons of a house took one wife between them. This change eventually introduced kinship through males. It involved the breaking up of the primitive form of the family, and led in time to the transference of the government from the mother to the father. After this the practice of monandry arose, the younger brothers making separate marriages, and thus Thibetan polyandry died out, leaving behind it the Levirate, that is to say, the obligation of brothers to marry in turn the widow of a brother deceased, a custom which the Old Testament has rendered familiar to us. The Levirate next died out, and thus the family slowly assumed the form to which we are accustomed. It will thus be seen that the keystone of Mr. McLennan's system is the practice of polyandry, which, indeed, under his theory is a necessary stage of the development of the family relationship. I cannot, however, regard polyandry as having been a general and necessary stage in human development. I have therefore suggested that individual marriage rose out of capture. That just as a warrior converted to his own use the animals which he captured, and made slaves of the men, so he made a wife of any woman whom he admired, the capture giving him a right which the other men of the tribe did not share. This view, indeed, seems so natural that I wonder it had not been before suggested; and I observe that one or two recent writers have treated it as a recognised and well-known fact, whereas it cannot at present claim to be more than an individual theory which none of the authorities on such a question, such as Mr. Darwin, and Mr. McLennan himself, have as yet accepted. Mr. McLennan, indeed, denies that my views are "in the least degree probable," and if such a question could be decided by authority, I should at once bow to his decision. Such, however, is not the case, and I will only say that, before my work was published, I had foreseen and weighed as carefully as I was able, the objections which Mr. McLennan has now brought forward; and that I then thought, and still think, that I have satisfactorily replied to them. The fundamental objection which Mr. McLennan urges I did not indeed expect him to allege. Like Bachofen, I commenced with a time when marriage did not exist. Mr. McLennan, however, replies:—"Sir John Lubbock has not only failed to show that the initial stage of his scheme ever

existed, but has failed also to make it in any the least degree probable that it ever existed" (p. 449).

I will, in reply, content myself here with quoting one authority only for the existence of my first stage, an authority for whom I have the highest respect, namely, Mr. McLennan himself:—"I conceive," he says, "that marriage was at first unknown;" in fact, the initial state in his system is practically the same as in mine; the differences between our views lie in the subsequent stages.

In his last essay Mr. McLennan discusses Sir Henry Maine's views on the Ancient Irish Family. The question is very complex, and those who have not Sir Henry's work by their side for reference will not find this chapter very easy to follow.

The Irish family "was anciently divided into four groups known as the 'geilfine,' 'deirbfine,' 'iarfine,' and 'indfine' divisions. . . . Within the family seventeen members were organised in four divisions, of which the junior class, known as the 'geilfine' divisions, consisted of five persons; the 'deirbfine' the second in order, the 'iarfine' the third in order, and the 'indfine' the senior of all, consisted respectively of four persons. . . . If any person was born into the 'geilfine' division, its eldest member was promoted into the 'deirbfine,' the eldest member of the 'deirbfine' passed into the 'iarfine,' the eldest member of the 'iarfine' moved into the 'indfine,' and the eldest member of the 'indfine' passed out of the organisation altogether."

A complete family therefore would be composed as follows:—

| Indfine. | Iarfine. | Deirbfine. | Geilfine. | |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| A ₁ | A ₂ | A ₃ | A ₄ | Fathers and brothers. |
| B ₁ | B ₂ | B ₃ | B ₄ | Sons and first cousins. |
| C ₁ | C ₂ | C ₃ | C ₄ | Grandsons and second cousins. |
| D ₁ | D ₂ | D ₃ | D ₄ | Great-grandsons and third cousins. |
| | | | E ₄ | Great-great-grandsons. |

On many points, however, Mr. McLennan dissents from the views of Sir H. Maine.

Sir Henry Maine, for instance, says, "The Brehon writers speak of its (the geilfine division) consisting of a father, son, grandson, great-grandson, and great-great-grandson, which is a conceivable case of geilfine relationship, though it can scarcely be a common one." Mr. McLennan, on the contrary, thinks that "it was, actually or constructively, the only one—when the division was full—*i.e.*, when all its possible members were in being."

Again, Sir Henry Maine considers this strange arrangement to be "a monument of that power of the father which is the first and greatest landmark in the course of legal history."

Mr. McLennan entirely dissents from this, and indeed after discussing Sir Henry Maine's views with ingenuity and erudition, he concludes that the objections he has brought forward "are fatal to Sir Henry Maine's account of the system. He has failed to throw light either on its purposes or its principles. He has made no single feature of it clear in the light of Roman law, and after all his ingenious reasonings, has left its main features as mysterious as he found them."

Whatever conclusions on these subjects may ultimately be arrived at, everyone who reads Mr. McLennan's book must feel that he brings to the inquiry an immense

amount of learning, and has stated his views with great ingenuity. All students of early history will hope that he may have leisure and health to pursue his studies.

JOHN LUBBOCK

OUR BOOK SHELF

Science in Sport made Philosophy in Earnest. Edited by R. Routledge, B.Sc., F.C.S. (London: Routledge and Sons, 1877.)

THE title of this book at once recalls Dr. Paris' "Philosophy in Sport made Science in Earnest." The author, however, tells us in his preface, that the reason he has adopted so similar a title is that his original design was to re-edit Dr. Paris's well-known, but now antiquated, book; finding, however, that mere patchwork would not bring the book into harmony with the present state of science, he determined to treat the subject afresh, and the volume before us is the result of that determination. The inversion of the title is, we think, wise, though some will object to the use of the word philosophy in the sense meant by the author, and will contend that the term physics should have been employed. The graver question is whether, under any circumstances, science should be taught by sugar-sticks. Our own opinion is decidedly against all books of this kind, and there can be little doubt intelligent children prefer not being trapped into the study of any subject, but like work openly and honestly put before them. Such books as the original editions of Mrs. Marcet's "Conversations in Chemistry," or the altogether admirable "Chapters on Sound," and other little books by Miss C. A. Martineau, are the best kind of reading to put into the hands of children who wish to learn the rudiments of natural knowledge. Nevertheless, Mr. Routledge has done his work extremely well. Those who like science and a story running together, will here find a trustworthy, clear, and accurate introduction to the study of physics. W. F. B.

Mushrooms and Toadstools. By Worthington G. Smith. (London: Hardwicke and Bogue.)

THIS is a reprint in a separate form of the descriptions illustrative of two large sheets of figures of edible and poisonous fungi, with the addition of two key-plates. Not having been written and designed for separate publication, it is consequently not so complete as it might otherwise have been, and we doubt whether by itself it will prove of much service in the discrimination of good and bad fungi. Mr. Worthington Smith may be accepted as a safe and trustworthy guide, having himself suffered on one or two occasions from reckless indulgence in doubtful species; he is desirous of sparing others like sufferings, and approaches the subject fortified by experience. In conjunction with the plates this key is admirably suited to fulfil its purpose; as a separate work, we doubt whether the author himself would feel wholly satisfied. If this reprint leads to a wider acquaintance with the diagrams, which ought to find a place in every schoolroom, its reproduction in this form will fully justify the step which the publishers have taken. M. C. C.

Between the Danube and the Black Sea; or, Five Years in Bulgaria. By Henry C. Barkley, C.E. (London: John Murray, 1876.)

THIS book has not been written to take advantage of the interest in Bulgaria excited by the present crisis. Mr. Barkley really spent twelve years in Turkey—the first five commencing shortly after the Crimean war, and the other seven at a subsequent period. He was employed as an engineer in connection with a Bulgarian railway, and had ample opportunities of becoming well acquainted with the country and the people. These opportunities he took good advantage of, and in the volume before us has recorded his impressions and adventures in simple and